



Disaster Strikes – Hurricane Katrina and the National Finance Center

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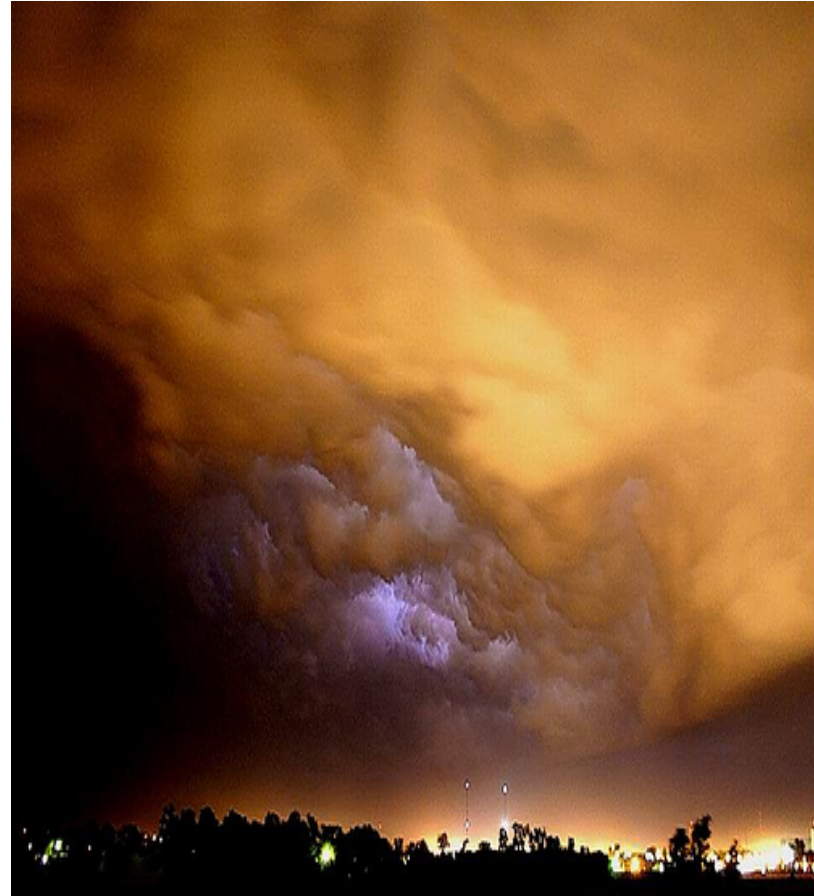
Business Continuity Approach

- Disaster Recovery Plan
- Business Continuity Plan
- Uninterruptible Power Supply
- Emergency Power Supply
- Two annual NFC drills
 - Conducted DR exercise on August 16-18, 2005
- USDA and Governmentwide drills
- Three historical near misses



Hurricane Katrina

- Activated DR on Friday evening
- Deployed Advanced Teams on Saturday morning
- Completed payroll late Saturday evening, including M-Th work
- Shutdown data center and facility early Sunday
- Disaster Declaration made Sunday evening



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COOP Concept

- **Subscription service for data center, workstations, and bulk print and mail**
- **Philadelphia site used for data center and 101 data center staff seats**
- **Grand Prairie site used for 150 business operations seats**
- **Plans all geared to loss of New Orleans facilities**



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Realities of Katrina

- Implications were larger than anyone imagined
- NFC facility not accessible. This would be a long-term situation
- Immediate focus was:
 - Service to the customers
 - Accountability and caring for employees
 - Fiscal accountability
- Balance delivery and personal needs
 - 50% of staff lost homes and 30% had significant damage
 - Uncertainty of loved ones



Locating and Deploying Staff

- Local telecommunications infrastructure mostly inoperable
- Pre-planned out-of-town contact numbers functioning
- No single data base for locating people in shelters
- Travel impacted by roads and gas shortages
- Families had to be addressed



Government Travel Credit Cards

- Due to long-term staff deployment, increased credit limits
- Reactivated dormant accounts
- Reimbursed employees for expenses in a timely manner
- Centralize travel functions, i.e. applications, establishing and increasing limits, monitoring usage and payments, etc.



Expanding Capabilities to Meet Long-Term Deployment

- **Duration of COOP means more seats needed**
 - Trailers acquired in Atlanta
 - USDA sites used in Kansas City, Rosslyn, and Alexandria
 - Customer sites in Birmingham and Reston leveraged
 - **Secure telecom and postal mail were two key infrastructure challenges to achieve**
 - T-1 line
- Redirecting incoming mail



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First Job, First

- **Critical data center resources are recovered**
- **Essential services are restored**
- **Payroll is made timely while migrating 60,000 new payees (10% growth)**
- **Financial systems returned online**



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Settling in For the Long Haul

- Subscription service requires sharing of resources during 6 week recovery period
- Essential services require dedicated resources
- Impact of Katrina implies 6 months not 6 weeks
- Customer dedicated connectivity key issue
- Decision made to build out in “cold site”



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Settling in For the Long Haul

- Established housing for deployed staff and family near AWS and ROC
- Established shuttle service to/from AWS
- Coordinated employee assistance programs; such as medicinal needs, clothing, and grief counseling
- Developed Evacuation Payment Policy



Focus on Service Delivery

- Resuming all services requires that all resources (human, technical, and other) be available
- Service delivery focus is for Agency customers, payees, vendors, and employees
- Give them the challenge and the tools and stay out of their way



New Orleans Critical to a Timely Return to Full Service

- Returning to full service requires a full staff
- Deployed status has limited seat availability, some security concerns, is costly, and comes at a personal sacrifice to many
- The New Orleans facility had the infrastructure to address business needs and support the additional population



Reconstitution in New Orleans

- Housing, family issues, telecommunications, postal services, and local infrastructure had to be addressed
 - Security
 - Logistics
 - Habitation necessities
 - Health care
- Family & friends, FEMA trailers, and cruise ships address most housing needs



It's Nice to Have Friends

- **USDA Secretary Johannes and entire USDA family strongly supported COOP needs and the employees**
- **Much support from FMS**
- **Tremendous outreach by Federal colleagues, local Governments, local organizations, and people in deployed locations**
- **Food, clothing, education opportunities, friendship, and other assistance**



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Lessons Learned - NFC

- **Subscription service model not ideal for essential service provider**
- **Administrative support a key aspect of support for long-term deployed staff**
- **For long-term deployment, coordination of outreach efforts targeting employees becomes an essential task**



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Lessons Learned - NFC

- **Some organizations benefit from close proximity with one another**
- **Must revalidate plan assumptions, plan contents, and business requirements annually**
- **You cannot assume infrastructure items will be there for you**



Lessons Learned - NFC

- **Communications are always the challenge; planned communications channels a real aid**
- **Having a well-drilled plan allows for the basics to be accomplished with little intervention and allows management to focus on exceptions and surprises**
- **Employee moral high due in part to positive feedback within Federal community**



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Lessons Learned - Governmentwide

- Central clearinghouse for information, needs, and resources
- Single people tracking data base
- Handbook to guide Federal Agencies through extraordinary authorities
- Single coordination point for Federal efforts and issues



Working to Mitigate Future Risks

- Data Center equipment will remain at subscription service location until new primary facility is completed at the Denver Federal Center
- New AWS alternatives being explored
- All business operations are being reassessed based on experiences
- Lessons learned are being incorporated into revised DR and COOP plans



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People, Planning, & Practice

- People who understand & believe in DR and COOP make it happen
- Plans have to account for your threats, the business requirements for COOP, and the people side of things
- Practice is the best teacher. Practice on a regular schedule (top priority) and against changing scenarios. Capture the valuable lessons from each exercise



Prolog

- Facing the most devastating natural disaster to impact the U.S., the employees of NFC set aside their personal concerns and focused on delivering for their customers
- Given such an event, the best came out of people, far and wide, and we are all better because of it



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September 15, 2005



September 7, 2005



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